

Chairman's Statement
Sen. Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK)
"Iran's Nuclear Impasse: Next Steps"
July 20, 2006

Within the past few weeks, the regime in Iran illustrated yet again why it is a threat that the world cannot afford to ignore any longer. There is no doubt that Iran is behind the two-front war being waged against our closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, by Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists. Just like there is no doubt that Iran is behind the road-side bombs and other terrorist acts killing Allied soldiers and innocent civilians in Iraq. For decades, the regime in Iran has been exporting terror all around the world and killing untold numbers including Americans, Israelis, Iraqis, and even fellow Iranians. Iran is already a threat to the world without a nuclear capability—nuclear weapons will only exacerbate that threat.

When the Iran's nuclear weapons program was first revealed by Iranian dissidents in 2002, the international community could no longer deny the problem. In 2003, Germany, France, and Britain—the "E.U.-3"—responded by offering Iran a generous economic package and a promise of help developing so called "peaceful" sharing of nuclear technology. The condition was that Iran would have to stop enriching uranium. After lengthy negotiations, Iran responded by breaking the I.A.E.A seals on its centrifuges and rejecting the deal. The following year, the Europeans tried another round of negotiations, resulting in even more E.U.-3 concessions. But again, after lengthy negotiations, Iran responded by breaking I.A.E.A seals on its uranium conversion facility and continued to develop nuclear technology.

We now know that Hassan Rowhani, the Iranian representative at the negotiations, admitted that while he was negotiating with the Europeans, the regime rushed to complete a major nuclear site. The *Telegraph* article, aptly entitled "How we duped the West, by Iran's nuclear negotiator," quotes Rowhani as saying he created a "tame situation" to buy time for the regime to finish the job.

President Bush has decided to give Iran one more opportunity at negotiations. The U.S. has expanded the already generous economic incentive package and has made Iran one final offer. It is uncertain whether this new round of negotiations represents an exercise in truly checking every last box or the Administration is indulging to the prevailing appeasement ideology in Europe and in some quarters at the State Department. Let's hope that nobody is actually counting on good faith from a regime which has shown no sign of it, and that these many efforts are simply an instrument of pressure for the international community to demonstrate that everything has truly been tried.

Amazingly, even after all we know regarding the regime's central role in terrorism both inside and outside of Iran, some analysts here in the United States jump at the chance to defend Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Since the beginning, the Iranian regime has referred to the United States as "the Great Satan" and, even when a so-called reformer was president, the regime rules Iran with an iron fist—crushing all who would dare call

Chairman's Statement
Sen. Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK)
"Iran's Nuclear Impasse: Next Steps"
July 20, 2006

for democracy and freedom—and continues to be a state sponsor of terror. Against all rationality, the apologists believe the regime will somehow have a change of heart if only the U.S. offers trade relations, university scholarships, and relaxed travel visas to the regime.

The regime's stall tactics are well documented, and recent Iranian calls for more time and talking appear to be more of the same. Assuming that these will eventually fail to deter an Iranian nuclear program, the U.S. has three options left: sanctions, military action and aggressive democracy promotion.

Unfortunately, sanctions are not a promising option. First, they must be agreed upon by everyone. Second, even when they are, they haven't worked. Third, they won't pass in the U.N. Given the track record with the U.N. on Burma, Sudan, Iraq, North Korea and any other dangerous regime, it is highly unlikely we will see the Security Council enforce an effective sanctions package against Iran. It would be equally difficult for the United States to form a coalition of willing nations since many European countries depend on Iran's energy exports and several Western nations have significant trade relations with the regime.

So, what about military options? While a full-scale invasion is not necessarily "off the table," it doesn't appear to have any serious weight in the current policy track of the Administration. Surgical strikes, on the other hand, appear to be within the realm of possibility. Advocates say there are only a limited number of nuclear sites, and striking them would cripple Iran's program. Opponents say our intelligence on Iran is limited and unreliable. Regardless, it is doubtful that President Bush wants to pass on to his successor the same unresolved problems he inherited—North Korea, Iran, and al-Qaeda. Surgical air strikes might be a fast and effective way to ensure he doesn't leave office with Iran having a nuclear arsenal with which to blackmail and threaten free nations.

Perhaps the greatest hope the world has is the spirit of liberty among the Iranian people. Seventy percent of the Iranian people are below the age of 30. These young people want a country of opportunity, freedom, a chance to live out their dreams—not an oppressive dictatorship under constant isolation from the free world. As was the case in the former Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, and many of the other Soviet satellites, the role of democracy revolutionaries was essential to these countries' transformation.

Iran poses a grave threat to the world but an even graver threat to Iranians; and therein lays our greatest hope for peace. By aggressively and intelligently supporting the millions of young Iranians who long for freedom and opportunity, the free world can loosen the iron grip of the ayatollahs. That's why I've co-sponsored the Iran Freedom

Chairman's Statement
Sen. Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK)
"Iran's Nuclear Impasse: Next Steps"
July 20, 2006

and Support Act. But just throwing money at so-called democracy promotion programs isn't enough. If not done right, programs can do more harm than good. We have a responsibility to Iran's young people to oversee these programs.

The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss these policy options and the next steps for dealing with Iran. I want to thank the witnesses for being here to day, and I look forward to your testimonies.

www.coburn.senate.gov/ffm